
Post the Occupancy Limit

527 CMR 10.17

An approved sign issued by the building official must be posted near the main exit stating the maximum number of persons allowed within the space.

New severe penalties for exceeding occupancy limits and blocked egress were created in the aftermath of the fire at The Station nightclub.

Make Sure All Upholstered, Reupholstered & Molded Furniture is Code Compliant

527 CMR 29

OSFM Advisory 12/20/2002

All regulated seating shall comply with the applicable provisions of 527 CMR 29. Requirements for non-sprinklered buildings are different than for buildings equipped with automatic sprinklers. Furniture should be resistant to fire. It can produce volumes of toxic smoke.

Keep Means of Egress Clear and Properly Lit

527 CMR 10.03

The means of escape from the building must always be kept clear of obstructions, properly lighted, in good repair, and ready for use. This shall include removal of snow and ice as necessary.

Maintain the Fire Protection Systems

527 CMR 1.06

All fire protection systems (such as fire alarm, smoke and heat detection, and sprinkler systems) shall remain operable and in good condition at all times. Systems shall be tested and inspected as required.

Maintain Fire Extinguishers

527 CMR 10.02

Fire extinguishers shall be installed as directed by the local fire department and inspected, tested, and maintained in accordance with NFPA 10.

Keep Fire Lanes Free of Obstructions

527 CMR 10.03

All designated fire lanes shall be clearly marked and kept free of obstructions.

Fire prevention requires teamwork. Local fire departments want to work closely with owners and managers to create safe places of public assembly and to help keep them that way.

Fire Safety in Places of Assembly



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A PLACE OF ASSEMBLY is defined as a structure occupied for people to gather together for civic, social, or religious functions. The Massachusetts State Building Code defines assembly use in five main categories. The categories include uses such as theaters, dance halls, nightclubs, restaurants, exhibition halls, and places of worship.

This pamphlet is designed to provide a brief summary of the fire prevention regulations affecting places of assembly. References are included where detailed information may be found.

Fire prevention laws may be found in MGL Chapter 148 and fire code regulations may be found in 527 Code of Massachusetts Regulations (CMR). The Department of Fire Services' website has these and many helpful Office the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) Advisories - www.mass.gov/dfs and look for *OSFM Advisories* under *News & Events* and under *Fire Prevention*.

Ensure Compliance and Safety of Open Flame Devices

527 CMR 10.03

Open flame devices and special food service devices (such as candles, food warmers, and chafing dishes) shall comply with NFPA 101 and a permit from the fire department may be required. Consult local fire department prior to use.

Obtain a Permit for Special Effects

527 CMR 2.09

Special effects and pyrotechnics (including flash powder and flash paper) require a permit from the local fire department and must be conducted by a licensed person.

Train Employees

527 CMR 10.13

Employees shall be trained in the duties they are to perform in case of fire, panic, or other emergency. Experience has shown that patrons look to the staff for guidance during an emergency.

Develop and Maintain an Egress Plan

527 CMR 10.13

A plan showing the occupant load, seating diagram, and location of exits and aisles leading to exits shall be approved by the fire department and kept on the premises. The egress plan should also be posted.

Prohibit Smoking

527 CMR 10.07

Smoking shall be prohibited in all structures intended for the production and viewing of performing arts or motion pictures and are usually provided with fixed seats.

Make Sure Decorations, Curtains, Draperies and Window Treatments are Code Compliant

527 CMR 21

Documentation shall be provided showing that all regulated materials conform with the applicable provisions of 527 CMR 21 regarding fire resistance and should be kept on file and available on the premises. Documentation should be provided by any vendor or manufacturer supplying new materials.

Announce the Exits

527 CMR 10.13

In all theaters, nightclubs, dance halls, and similar occupancies an audible announcement shall be made prior to the performance describing the location of exits to be used in case of fire or other emergency. Printed programs should show egress routes.

Designate a Crowd Manager

527 CMR 10.13

OSFM Advisory 01/05/2007

Any occupancy described as a nightclub, dance hall, or similar use shall have a designated crowd manager who is assigned defined duties regarding the safety of the occupants of the building. See Fire Marshal's Advisory of 1/5/07 for sample check list for use by the manager.